

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Franklin County Training School – Riverside Union School

Louisburg, Franklin County, FK0554, Listed 1/4/2012

Nomination by Nancy Van Dolsen

Photographs by Nathan Moreschi, December 2006, and Ann Swallow, November 2010



Classroom Building, Franklin County Training School – 1951



Classroom Building, Riverside Union School - 1960

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name **Franklin County Training School-Riverside Union School**
other names/site number **Louisburg Elementary School**

2. Location

street & number **53 West River Road** not for publication **N/A** vicinity **N/A**
city or town **Louisburg** state **North Carolina** code **NC** county **Franklin** code **069** zip code **27549**

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this **X** nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property **X** meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide **X** locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official

Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

____ entered in the National Register

____ See continuation sheet.

____ determined eligible for the National Register

____ See continuation sheet.

____ determined not eligible for the National Register

____ removed from the National Register

____ other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

☒ private
☒ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
3	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

Name of related multiple property listing N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: **Education**

Sub: **school**

Present Functions

Cat: **Vacant**

Sub:

Cat: **Education**

Sub: **education-related**

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Modern Movement

No Style

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation **Brick, Concrete**

roof **Asphalt Shingle, Synthetic: Rubber, Other: Polyurethane Foam**

walls **Brick**

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- | | | |
|----------|----------|--|
| X | A | Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. |
| | B | Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past. |
| | C | Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction. |
| | D | Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history. |

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- | | | |
|----------|----------|--|
| | A | owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes. |
| | B | removed from its original location. |
| | C | a birthplace or a grave. |
| | D | a cemetery. |
| | E | a reconstructed building, object, or structure. |
| | F | a commemorative property. |
| X | G | less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years. |

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Education

Ethnic Heritage: Black

Period of Significance **1951-1968**

Significant Dates **1951, 1960, 1964**

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) **N/A**

Cultural Affiliation **N/A**

Architect/Builder **Unknown**

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

☐ previously listed in the National Register

☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register

☐ designated a National Historic Landmark

☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State agency

☐ Federal agency

☐ Local government

☐ University

☒ Other – Franklin County School District, Louisburg, North Carolina

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property **7.2 acre**

UTM References **Zone: 17**

Easting: 742460

Northing: 3997620

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title **Nancy Van Dolsen**

date **January 7, 2011**

street & number **1601 Highland Drive**

telephone **252.243.7861**

city or town **Wilson**

state **NC**

zip code **27893**

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name **Superintendent, Franklin County Schools** number **53 West River Road** City or town **Louisburg**

state **NC** zip code **27549** phone **919.496.2600**

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Franklin County Training School-Riverside Union School
Franklin County, N.C.

Narrative Description

The Riverside Campus of the Franklin County School System in Louisburg, North Carolina includes five buildings; three of these buildings are included as part of the Franklin County Training School-Riverside Union School nomination. The campus is now the central office for the county school system.

The five buildings stand on a ten-acre property that slopes down to West River Road, which is the northern boundary of the property. The school is southwest of the historic core of the town of Louisburg, outside of the town's residential and commercial area. The site includes paved drives, parking, a separate bus loop and car drop off, and play areas to the southwest of the buildings. Covered poured concrete walks connect the buildings.

The five buildings include a 1951 Classroom Building, a 1960 Classroom Building (with a small 1985 addition), a 1964 Cafeteria Building with a 1980 addition, a 1956 Classroom and Office building that has a very large addition, and a 1976 Multipurpose/Boiler Room Building. The 1951 and 1960 Classroom buildings and the 1964 Cafeteria are included within the historic boundaries of the Franklin County Training School-Riverside Union School. The nomination excludes the much-altered 1956 building, which has a post-period of significance addition that more than doubles the size of the building, and the ca. 1976 building, which postdates 1968, the end of the property's period of significance. These excluded buildings are located to the east and north of the Cafeteria, respectively.

Classroom Building, Franklin County Training School, 1951

The classroom building is a ten-bay, side-gable, single-pile building that has a shed-roof porch running the full length of the façade. The porch may be original, as indicated by the presence of exposed rafter tails similar to those found on the rear of the building. If not original, the porch was most likely constructed during the period of significance, prior to 1960.

The linear building has five rooms, and a small storage and furnace room at the southwest corner that has a lower side-gable roof. A break in the roof occurs between the third and fourth bay (from the north end of the building), with the northern end of the building having a slightly higher roof (approximately two feet higher) and an approximately four-foot greater depth than the rest of the building. The building is concrete block with a row of bricks for every two course of concrete block; the exterior of the building has a brick veneer, laid in a common bond pattern of one row of headers to every six rows of stretchers. The area above the doors on the façade was constructed solely of brick, with flat arches above the openings. A soldier course of bricks defines the watertable. All of the windows in the building have sills composed of bricks laid with their headers projecting slightly beyond the face of the wall. The asphalt-shingled, low-

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pitched gable roof projects about one-foot over the walls around the perimeter of the building. Large triangular brackets support the projecting roof on the gable ends.

The asphalt-shingled porch roof is supported by thirteen slightly tapered wood pillars that stand on a concrete block wall that is open at the ends of the building. A covered walkway, which is not connected to the classroom building, slopes down to the south end of the porch. Four concrete block steps descend from the north end of the porch. Five small openings are located at the floor level along the length of the concrete balustrade to allow water to drain off the porch. The pillars feature a decorative cap. The exposed porch roof rafters rest on a ledger board and extend to a large plate that is supported by the pillars. The porch floor is poured concrete.

The façade has five doors to provide access to each classroom. Three classrooms have one window adjacent to the door on the façade, the central classroom has two windows on the façade, and the northernmost classroom has no window on the façade but four windows on the gable end. The windows on the façade are twelve-light metal units with the central six lights able to be opened. The doors on the façade are six-light over three horizontal panels.

The north gable end of the building is slightly banked, and has four paired eight-light metal windows, of which the central four lights are operable. A large rectangular, wood, louvered opening for ventilation is located at the gable peak. Twelve windows are located on the rear of the building. The slightly projecting section has five windows, two small two-light windows, two six-light metal windows of which the bottom two lights are operable, and one twelve-light window which is identical to those on the façade. Two of these windows have had some lights removed to accommodate small window-unit air conditioners. The remaining seven windows on the rear elevation are one small two-light metal window and six twelve-light windows identical to those on the façade; two of these have been altered for a window-unit air conditioner.

At the southwest corner of the building is the small storage and furnace room that is also brick veneered. This section of the building does not have the decorative watertable but does have brick sills for the small window openings on its north, south, and east sides; a door for access is located on the west elevation. All of these opening are covered with plywood. A plain chimney stack rises from the northeast corner of this room and pierces the extended roof of the main block of the building.

The south gable end of the building has three windows: two six-light metal units with the bottom two lights operable and one twelve-light metal unit with the central six lights operable. A large rectangular wood louvered opening for ventilation is located at the gable peak.

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Within the building, each classroom is simply finished, with the exposed concrete block and brick walls painted. The ceilings were originally covered with plasterboard but are now exposed. Rehabilitation plans include replacing the plasterboard ceilings. The floors are poured concrete, with decorative scoring to resemble square blocks. The windows have no surrounds, and the trim surrounding each door opening is composed of plain three-inch boards with mitered corners.

The building is presently not in use, but is in the process of being rehabilitated for use as an educational building, community center, and archive for documents and items relating to the education of African Americans in Franklin County

Classroom Building, Riverside Union School, 1960, 1985

The 1960 classroom building is a one-story concrete block building sheathed with all-stretcher bond brick. The building is constructed on a concrete slab on grade, and has exposed precast concrete joists with a low-slope urethane foam roof. The L-shaped building has a double-loaded corridor plan with a 1985 bathroom addition on the west end. The building has steam heat generated from the boiler building on campus and no central air conditioning.

Recessed steel double-door entrances into the building are located on the south and north elevations, and two on the west elevation. The roof extends over the classroom windows on the north, south, and east elevations. The south elevation features an entrance at the east end, and ten steel windows, two for each classroom. The steel windows are paired, with each component featuring three-horizontal lights (with a larger center pane) over three steel vertical panels. The west elevation is composed of three parts. At the south end of this elevation is the end of the "L," which is the 1985 bathroom addition; this section is punctuated by a recessed entrance and has no windows. The central portion of the elevation has a double-leaf entrance and two sets of paired windows. These windows feature three-horizontal lights (with a larger center pane) over one large steel panel. The north end of the elevation is a blind brick wall.

The north elevation of the building is also composed of three sections. The east end is a blank brick wall; the central section features recessed double-leaf steel doors; the right hand door is full-size, and the left hand door is narrower. The doors are flanked by sidelights that are composed of two panes of glass. A covered walkway leads from this entrance to the 1951 classroom building. To the west of the entrance is a single window with three-horizontal lights (with a larger center pane) over three steel vertical panels. The remaining section of the elevation is comprised of six steel windows, two for each classroom. The steel windows are paired, with each component featuring three-horizontal lights (with a larger center pane) over three steel vertical panels. The east elevation features ten steel windows, two for each classroom.

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The steel windows are paired, with each component featuring three-horizontal lights (with a larger center pane) over three steel vertical panels.

Within, the building has two corridors, one running north/south, with the second corridor running east/west. Along the north/south corridor are five classrooms on the east side, and a supervisor's room, health room, office, lobby, and two bathrooms on the west side. The east/west corridor features four classrooms and a bathroom on the south side and three classrooms and a bathroom on the north side. The bathrooms on the east/west corridor are a 1985 addition to the building.

Interior finishes to the building are painted concrete block walls, carpeted floors and dropped ceilings. The classrooms have been converted into offices.

Cafeteria, Riverside Union School, 1964, 1980

The cafeteria building is a concrete block building sheathed in all-stretcher bond brick. The building was constructed on a concrete slab on grade, and has a low-slope rubber membrane roof. The original portion of the building is composed of a dining room, vestibule, kitchen, mechanical room, pantries and refrigeration room; in 1980, a dining room was added to the east elevation. Covered walkways lead from the building on the south and west elevations. The building has its own oil-fired boiler, hot water heat, and central air conditioning.

The west side of the building has two entrances, one centered on the façade, which has covered walkways leading to it, and another which enters a mechanical room. The central entrance has a single door with a vertical light, and four concrete steps that lead up to it. This entrance leads into the original dining room. There are seven, long, narrow, steel windows to the south of the entrance that light the dining room. They are composed of five lights, with the third light from the top opening to allow ventilation.

The south elevation is comprised of three parts: the original dining room, the original recessed entry, and the 1980 dining room addition. There are four long, narrow, steel windows to the west of the entrance that light the original dining room. They are composed of five lights, with the third light from the top opening to allow ventilation. The recessed entrance is composed of a double-leaf door with the right hand door being full-size, and the left door narrower. Two lights are located above the doors and two to the west. The dining room addition section of the elevation has one large tripartite window that is comprised of five lights; these windows are double-glazed aluminum windows.

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The east elevation is composed of two sections: the dining room addition, and the original building. The dining addition features two large tripartite windows identical to the one found on the south elevation. The original portion of the elevation has a single-door on the south end, with no other features on the elevation.

A single steel door is located on the north elevation of the dining room addition. A recessed entry with a double-steel door providing access to the storage areas of the kitchen is on the north elevation of the original building.

Within, the two dining room areas have a vinyl composition tile floor, painted concrete block walls, and a drop acoustical-tile ceiling. The original dining room measures approximately fifty-five feet by twenty-six feet; the 1980 dining area measures twenty-nine feet by sixty-one feet. The original windows on the east elevation of the cafeteria remain in place between the original building and the addition. A vestibule is located between the two dining areas, and it has large quarry tile floors, and wainscot to the height of approximately four feet. The area has sinks for the students to wash their hands before dining.

The kitchen is an L-shaped room, roughly measuring twenty-nine feet by thirty-three feet. The room features a quarry tile floor, plaster and drop ceiling, and a large ventilated hood area in the northeast corner of the room. On the north side of the room, a door leads into a walk-in refrigerated area, a dry storage room and a mechanical room.

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Summary

The Franklin County Training School-Riverside Union School meets National Register of Historic Places Criterion A under two areas of significance: education and ethnic heritage/black. The historic campus is composed of three buildings, a 1951 Classroom Building, a 1960 Classroom building and a 1964 Cafeteria. The nomination excludes a much-altered 1956 building, which has a post-period of significance addition that more than doubles the size of the building, and the ca. 1976 building, which postdates 1968, the end of the property's period of significance.

The 1951 Classroom Building, built by African American veterans as part of a building trade training program, added needed space for the Franklin County Training School, which was a school for the county's African American students from first through twelfth grade. Another classroom building (now heavily altered) was constructed in 1956 to meet the needs of the expanding student population. The main school building for the Franklin County Training School, a 1928 Rosenwald-funded school, burned in 1960. In 1960, a twelve-classroom building was constructed, and in 1964, a cafeteria was added to the campus. The school became the Riverside Union School in 1960, and remained so until 1968, when it became Louisburg Elementary, housing only grades one through four. The change in use for the school campus, and the change in name, reflects the Franklin County School District's response to stronger enforcement by the federal government regarding desegregation of the nation's schools. This response followed a federal district court decision that struck down the Franklin County, North Carolina Board of Education's use of a "freedom-of-choice" plan to address discrimination. The court decision in *Harold Douglas Coppedge, et al versus the Franklin County Board of Education, et al*, a case that began wending its way through the courts in December 1965, and which was decided in 1967, ordered that the Franklin County school system had to file with the court a new plan for desegregation, and needed to make a report to the Court on October 15 of every year regarding the school district's efforts to become a unitary system. This 1967 decision was one of the first federal court decisions that struck down this policy; this was followed by the 1968 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Charles C. Green et al versus County School Board of New Kent County, Virginia*, which also struck down the use of "freedom-of-choice" plans. The Justice Department still counts the Franklin County school district as one of 361 districts in the United States still under desegregation orders where the government is still a party.

A new Louisburg Elementary School was built in 2000, and the campus became the home of the Riverside Magnet School in 2001. The campus remained in use as a school until 2006, when it became the administrative offices for the Franklin County School System.

The school campus' period of significance dates to 1951 through 1968, for its role in the education of Franklin County African American students from the date of the earliest surviving

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building on campus through 1968 when the Franklin County School District was placed under desegregation orders by the federal government with the government as a party to the legal action. It is of exceptional significance due to a continuation of its contribution to the education of African Americans in the county. These three buildings are the sole remaining architecturally intact resources dating from the pre-1968 era at the county's premier school for Louisburg's African American community.

Historical Narrative, Education and Ethnic Heritage/Black Context

At the opening of the twentieth century, the educational system for African Americans in North Carolina, and throughout the South, was rudimentary at best. The public school system had officially segregated the races in 1875, declaring that there should be separate but equal educational facilities for white and black children. Not until 1910, however, did public elementary schools for blacks begin receiving state funds. In 1913, further recognizing the need to improve schools for black students, North Carolina established the office of supervisor of rural elementary schools to promote the education of African American children. In 1921, a separate agency, the Division of Negro Education, was created to further advance public education for black students.¹ A survey in the early 1930s, conducted by the Division of Negro Education found that some black classrooms had sixty to one-hundred students, that only half of the schools stayed in session for the full school year, and that only seven percent of black students attended high school.²

Simultaneously, as North Carolina was working toward bettering education for its African American children, Julius Rosenwald, a Chicago philanthropist, started a fund for building new and modern school facilities for black students. Rosenwald (1862-1932), who made a fortune through his part ownership of Sears, Roebuck, and Company, became interested in aiding the African American community after reading two books, a biography of William H. Baldwin, a Northern white man who devoted his life to promoting black education in the South, and *Up From Slavery*, the story of Booker T. Washington's life. In early 1911 he met with Booker T. Washington in Chicago, and later that year, toured Washington's Tuskegee Institute, which impressed him greatly. In 1912, he was made a trustee of Tuskegee.³

Rosenwald created his fund for Southern education in 1917 with four funding priorities: the building of schoolhouses for rural African American children, the establishment of libraries, the education of teachers, and the development of centers for higher education for the black

¹ Jeffrey J. Crow, Paul D. Escott, Flora H. Hatley, *A History of African Americans in North Carolina* (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1992) 154, 155.

² Crow, 135.

³ Edwin R. Embree and Julia Waxman, *Investment in People: The Story of the Julius Rosenwald Fund* (Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1949) 5, 25-26.

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population.⁴ When Rosenwald established his fund, in the entire South there was not a single standard eight-grade rural black public school and no black public high school approved for even two years of high school work. Where there were African American schools, they were open an average of four months a year, and the teacher usually had only attended school through eighth grade.⁵

For a community to qualify for support to build a school they needed to meet certain criteria. According to a publication printed by the Rosenwald Fund, A school had to represent common effort by the state and county authorities and the local colored and white citizens. The state and county had to contribute to the building and agree to maintain it as a regular part of the public-school system. White citizens had to take an interest and contribute part of the money, since it was felt that white leadership was essential to the success of such a program in the South.... And the Negroes themselves had to show their desire for education by making gifts of money or labor, usually both.⁶

The buildings were to be constructed according to simple plans that were provided by the fund. The curriculum was to include formal and theoretical education and, as suggested by Booker T. Washington, students were also taught practical skills.⁷

Alabama was the first state to take advantage of the fund's support, and Tennessee, North Carolina, and Georgia soon followed. When the Fund closed its building program in 1932, North Carolina had received the greatest support and had constructed 813 buildings for 114,210 students at a cost of \$5,167,042.⁸ The fund had decided to end its building program not because it felt that its work was finished but they "felt that this particular demonstration had served its purpose of stimulating interest and must be discontinued in order that the southern states should not rely too heavily on outside aid and thus be delayed in assuming full responsibility for the schools...as an integral part of public provisions for the education of all people."⁹

In Franklin County, by 1929, the Rosenwald Fund, the local African American community, and the county school system had constructed fourteen Rosenwald Schools: five two-teacher schools, six three-teacher schools, one four teacher schools, and two seven-teacher

⁴ Embree and Waxman, 37.

⁵ Embree and Waxman, 38.

⁶ Embree and Waxman, 39.

⁷ Embree and Waxman, 40.

⁸ Embree and Waxman, 51. In addition to schools, these buildings included teacherages, training schools for teachers, and shops; Hanchett, 444.

⁹ Embree and Waxman, 57.

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schools, including the Franklin County Training School in Louisburg.¹⁰ In 1925, Frank Fogg (1870-1953) and John Sills (1876-1955) had approached the Franklin County Board of Education and stated that they had raised \$1,000.00 toward the expansion and improvement of the existing school for African Americans in Louisburg. The two were African American farmers who lived outside of Louisburg; Fogg had two school-age children, and Sills's wife and daughter were teachers in the public school system.¹¹ The Rosenwald Fund agreed to provide \$400 toward the cost of the first classroom and \$500 for each additional classroom. The Board of Education agreed to fund the remainder. Two acres of land for the school were chosen on Cripple Creek Road, now known as West River Road, and the Franklin County Training School was constructed and completed in 1928.

Between the 1920s when the Franklin County Training School was constructed, and 1951, when the classroom building was added to the campus, the African American population in the county had increased by 2,300 people, although the relative percentage of African Americans within the county population remained consistently about forty-four or forty-five percent.¹² The classroom building was needed to accommodate the growing number of students.

The classroom building and a gymnasium were constructed by returning African American World War II veterans as a building trade training program. This work was a form of adult education and a continuation of the school's mission to aid the African American community. A number of these returning veterans would have attended the school. Many young African Americans had been drafted into the military prior to receiving their high school diploma or had volunteered prior to graduation. Returning African American World War II veterans had a difficult time upon re-entering civilian life. These young men needed training so they could acquire skills to obtain jobs. In August 1945, the national office of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) warned its southern offices to expect an upsurge of violence, especially toward returning soldiers. On their return, black veterans faced segregation, disenfranchisement, and only low-paying menial jobs were available to them.¹³ Many black veterans had hoped that by excelling in the military they were fighting not only

¹⁰ "Rosenwald School Buildings in North Carolina from the Beginning until July 1, 1930, " Special Subject File, Division of Negro Education, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Records, State Archives, Raleigh, NC; transcribed by Thomas Hanchett; <http://www.rosenwaldplans.org/NCSchools.html#F>. April 2010.

¹¹ Federal Population Manuscript Census, 1920; Franklin County, North Carolina; <http://www.ancestry.com>. April 2010.

¹² Historical Census Browser, University of Virginia, Fisher Library; <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/>. April 2010.

¹³ After War, Civil Rights Exhibit, Western Carolina University; <http://www.wcu.edu/mhc/exhibits/AfterWar/civilrights.html>. April 2010.

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enemies abroad but also gaining greater opportunities and freedom at home, only to face disappointment.¹⁴

In 1950-1951, the Franklin County Board of Education had realized a need for more space at the Training School, especially for vocational education. Vocational education had always been a critical component of the curriculum of North Carolina's African American Training Schools, which were based on the beliefs of Booker T. Washington. The Board of Education voted to construct the five-room classroom building and gymnasium using unpaid labor by African American veterans. This saved the school district from having to pay to have the buildings constructed, and provided training to the veterans.¹⁵ Carl A. Harris (1904-1971) served as principal of the Franklin County Training School from 1938 through 1959, during the construction of the classroom building.¹⁶

In August 1951, the classroom building was completed, and the gymnasium soon after. Although the classroom building was constructed to contain the vocational training portion of the school, it was immediately pressed into service as classrooms for the lower grades, since the population continued to grow. The gymnasium served as a multipurpose space and also contained classrooms. By 1956, another classroom building was constructed, which also housed the library and science rooms. By 1960, almost 1,500 students attended school on the campus.

Between thirty-five and forty students were taught in each classroom. Each teacher would stay in her or his classroom for the entire day, teaching their grade. There were a number of electives for grade school including drama, choir, and band. During the day, there were also shows, such as puppet or magic shows, presented by outside performers held at the school so all students could attend. There was no cafeteria, so lunch was held in the home economics classroom. Students could purchase hot dogs from the school, bring lunch, or order lunch from African American restaurants in town.¹⁷

Teachers instilled a sense of ethics in the students, urging them to excel. They made sure that students completed their homework and achieved their full potential. Having all twelve grades on campus had the added benefit of providing the lower school students with positive role models in the upper grades.¹⁸

¹⁴ Gail Williams O'Brien, "Defining the Peace, World War II Veterans, Race and the Remaking of Southern Political Tradition," Book Review, *Journal of Southern History*, 1 February 2006.

¹⁵ Nathan Moreschi, North Carolina State Study List Application for the Riverside Porch Building, Franklin County, North Carolina, June 28, 2007. The veterans also constructed a gymnasium which was been demolished in the 1970s. The gymnasium also had classrooms.

¹⁶ Mary Green Johnson, Interviews with Nancy Van Dolsen, March 2010.

¹⁷ Johnson, Interview.

¹⁸ Johnson, Interview.

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During the summer, day camps were held on campus. Activities would include arts and crafts, croquet and ping pong. The campus served as a center for the African American community throughout the entire year.¹⁹

Other African American training schools underwent similar expansions during the 1950s. The Warren County Training School (NR 2006) in Wise, North Carolina had a cafeteria, agriculture building, gymnasium, and separate elementary school constructed in the 1950s. The Greene County Training School (NR 2003) in Snow Hill, North Carolina also had a combined cafeteria and classroom building and gymnasium built in the late 1950s. None of these buildings were constructed with free labor supplied by returning African American World War II veterans. Many of these African American schools had expanded in the 1950s so that Boards of Education could claim “separate but equal” facilities to help fight off integration.

In 1960, the Franklin County Training School campus was renamed Riverside Union School but still served the same function and population. The Rosenwald-funded school building burned in 1960. Also in 1960, a twelve-room brick classroom building was constructed. The campus now comprised a 1939 shop building (no longer extant), the 1951 classroom building, the 1956 classroom, library, science room building, and a 1950s gymnasium building (no longer extant).

During the 1960s, the 1951 classroom building continued to serve as elementary classrooms, and most of the rooms were used as fifth-grade classrooms. The 1960 classroom building served as mostly seventh through twelfth-grade classrooms.

At its peak of use in the 1960s, the Riverside Campus contained about 1,500 students, approximately 1,000 in elementary grades and 500 in grades seven through twelve. The school had thirty-one elementary school teachers and fourteen high school teachers, or approximately one teacher for every thirty-three students. In 1963, the North Carolina Division of School Planning noted that the facilities were “a crowded union school plant that has several teaching stations that do not meet acceptable standards. The facilities restrict the secondary program.”²⁰ In 1964, a cafeteria was constructed, which improved the campus.

In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court’s landmark decision in *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, struck down state laws that established separate public schools for white and black children as unconstitutional, overturning the 1896 decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* that had declared that separate but equal systems were constitutional. The 1954 decision stated that separate systems were inherently unequal. In 1955, school boards requested relief regarding

¹⁹ Johnson, Interview.

²⁰ North Carolina Department of Public Construction, Division of School Planning, *Franklin County Schools Facility Survey*, 1963; 18.

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the effort to desegregate, declaring that the task was complicated and difficult to administer. The Supreme Court responded with a decision known as Brown II that placed the responsibility of school desegregation on the district courts and ordered that desegregation occur “with all deliberate speed.”

According to court documents, Franklin County made no effort to desegregate its schools until 1965, when it put into place a freedom of choice plan, which in theory, allowed students to choose freely which school they wanted to attend regardless of their race.²¹ This would allow for defacto desegregation, by permitting (again, in theory) black students to attend white schools, and vice versa. This policy had been tested in a case in South Carolina (Briggs v. Elliott, 1955), when a U.S. District judge stated that Brown outlawed discrimination but did not demand integration.²²

In 1965, Harold Coppedge, a minor, with his father, Rev. Luther Coppedge challenged the Franklin County School District’s freedom of choice policy in court. Of the 3,100 African American students in the county in the 1965-66 school year, only seventy-six requested to attend the county’s all-white schools; only thirty-one were admitted. By the end of the school year, only six remained enrolled in white schools.

Harold Coppedge was one of two black students attending the white Edward Best High School; the other student, a young woman, did not make it the entire year. The young woman, along with others, was intimidated into leaving by a campaign of violence and aggression. The local newspaper printed the names of the black students who had requested to attend the all-white schools, publicly making them a target. The court documents stated that when black students elected to attend white schools:

²¹ United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, No. 11, 794. Howard Douglas Coppedge, a minor, by his father and next friend, Rev. Luther Coppedge, et als, Plaintiffs, and United states of America by Ramsey Clark, Attorney General, Plaintiff-Intervenor, versus The Franklin County Board of Education, a public body corporate; Argued February 5, 1968; Decided April 8, 1968; 2.

²² McDonough, Molly. “Making Brown Real: A North Carolina Family Fought Threats and Intimidation After Suing to Integrate Schools,” *American Bar Association Journal*, Online, Posted April 1, 2004. http://www.abjournal.com/magazine/article/making_brown_real/. December 2010. During this time, there was a careful legal distinction between desegregation and integration. Desegregation was “the giving of all pupils, white and Negro, an opportunity to elect, if they so desire, to attend any school within a school district without regard to their race.” (Vanore, Robert Jr., “North Carolina Desegregation Under the Civil Rights Acts of 1964,” Address made at the 1968 School Board Attorneys Conference, Institute of Government, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, February 23, 1969. Franklin County School District Archives, Riverside Campus, Louisburg, North Carolina.. 3-4). Integration was “the actual intermingling of the races in the schools either by voluntary choice or involuntary assignment.” (Vanore, 4).

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There followed, however, numerous acts of violence and threats directed against Negro members of the community, particularly those requesting transfers of their children into formerly all-white schools. Shots were fired into houses, oil was poured into wells and some of the Negro leaders were subjected to a barrage of threatening telephone calls. The violence was widely reported in the local press, and an implicit threat was carried home to everyone by publication of the names of Negro applicants for transfer. . . . Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that few Negro pupils availed themselves of the right of transfer into a formerly all-white school and that 98.5% of the Negro pupils in the district remained in all-Negro schools.²³

The case challenging the county's freedom of choice policy was put forth by the Reverend Luther Coppedge, his wife, Christine, and their son, Harold. The Coppedges were financially secure, owned their own twenty-acre farm, and were already active in the NAACP. Their case was presented by the Legal Defense Fund, which was founded in 1940 by Thurgood Marshall; their lawyer was Julius L. Chambers, who would become a legendary civil rights advocate and chief litigator for the NAACP. The case was joined by the Justice Department, which was able to join the litigation as a result of the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which allowed the Department to enforce the Brown decision. The Coppedges resolved to continue their fight, despite unending harassment, including drive-by shootings, poison in their well, harassing phone calls, the murder of their pets, and a burning cross on their lawn.²⁴

The Franklin County case was the Justice Department's first attack on free choice. They argued that freedom of choice combined with intimidation meant no choice. The U.S. Supreme Court would affirm the decision in *Coppedge et al v. the Franklin County School District et al* in their 1968 decision, *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County, Virginia*.²⁵

The judge in the 1967 Coppedge case, Judge Algernon Butler, ordered that the school board assign at least ten percent of the county's black students to predominantly white schools, and that at least two teachers of each race needed to be in each school. Despite the court's detailed order, the case has kept the Franklin County School District among 361 school districts in the nation that are still under desegregation orders where the government is a party. The

²³ United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, No. 11, 794. Howard Douglas Coppedge, a minor, by his father and next friend, Rev. Luther Coppedge, et als, Plaintiffs, and United states of America by Ramsey Clark, Attorney General, Plaintiff-Intervenor, versus The Franklin County Board of Education, a public body corporate; Argued February 5, 1968; Decided April 8, 1968; 2-3.

²⁴ McDonough, 1.

²⁵ McDonough, 1.

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plaintiffs' complaints have evolved from basic desegregation by numbers to details regarding quality of education, learning and discipline.

In the 1968-1969 school year, the Riverside Union School was changed in name and function into the Louisburg Elementary School serving grades one through four, in response to the federal court striking down of the "freedom of choice" policy. The school still educated predominantly African American students. In the 1975-1976 school year, the fifth grade was added to the campus, and in 1976-1977, kindergarten classes were also taught here.

A new elementary school was built a few miles away in the spring of 2000, and Louisburg Elementary School became the Riverside Magnet School in 2001. The magnet school closed in 2006 and the campus became the site for the administrative offices for the Franklin County School system, and the Franklin County Training School-Riverside Union School was no longer used for educational purposes.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The historic boundary includes the land immediately surrounding the three buildings and the play areas to the rear of the 1960 classroom building; it is a portion of parcel PIN 2805-44-7974, marked on the attached tax map, at a scale of one inch equals 200 feet, by a heavy black line.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the land surrounding the three significant school buildings, and provides an appropriate setting. The boundary excludes the post-period of significance 1976 boiler building and the much altered 1960/1980 classroom building.

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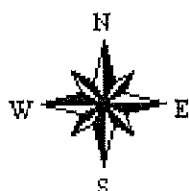
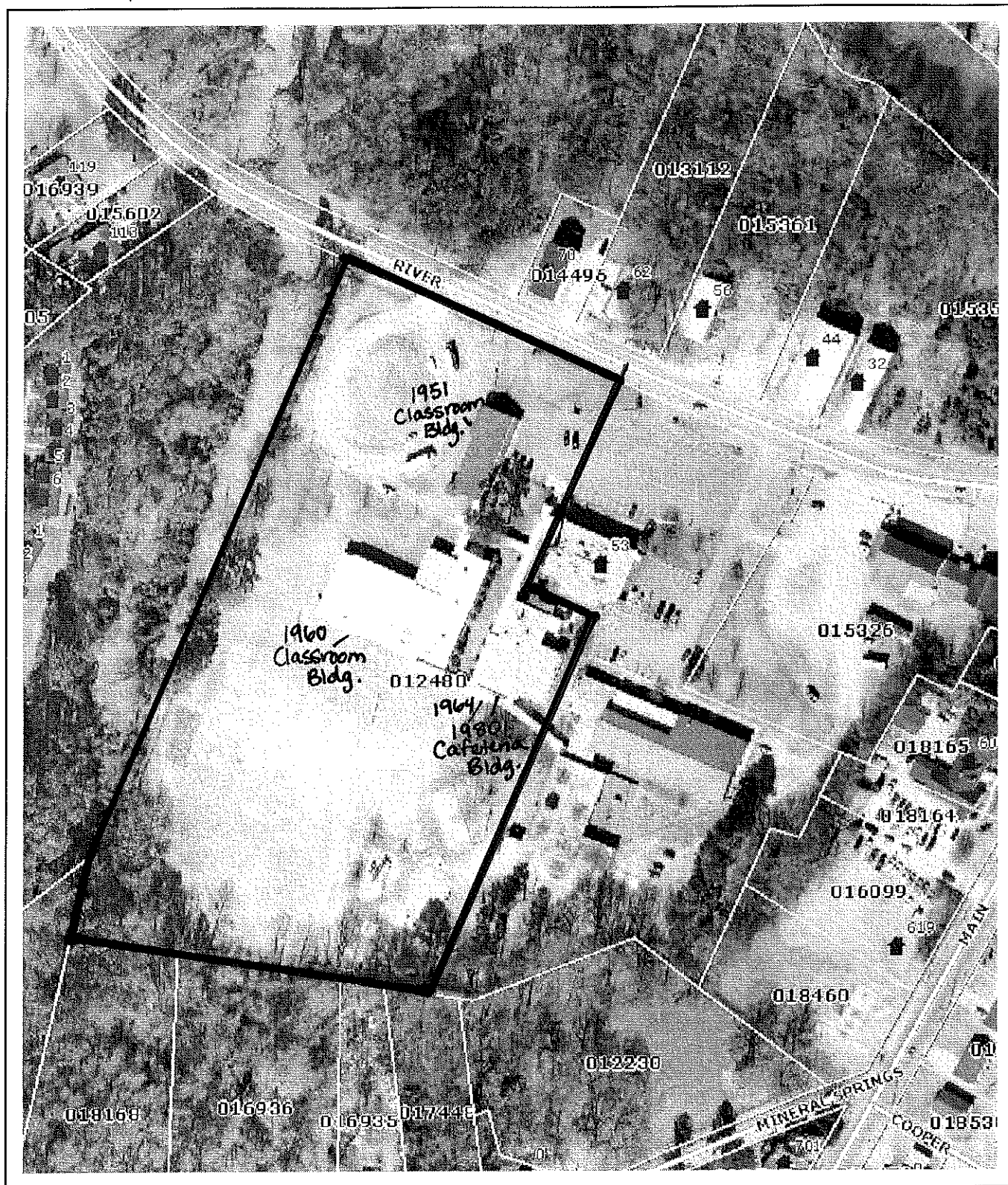
Franklin County Training School-Riverside Union School
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Exhibit 1



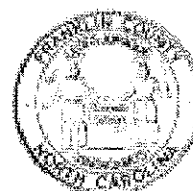
Ca. 1958 documentary photo of 1951 Classroom Building. The earlier classroom building to the left and the 1950s gymnasium the right are no longer extant.

Tax Map and Site Plan



Franklin County Training School - Riverside Union School
 53 West River Road
 Louisburg, Franklin County, NC

— National Register Boundary



Scale
 1" = 200'

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